



FÉLIX GUATTARI 2023-12-26

GUATTARI'S SEMINAR "DRIVE, BLACK HOLE"

PHILOFICTION BLACK HOLE, DESIRE, DRIVE, LACAN, NARCISSM

F : Freud's first topographical theories were quite science-based, neurophysiological; then, along the way, these models become quasi-anthropomorphic; the second topographical theory—the ego that struggles with the id and the grimacing personage of the superego—is presented somewhat as a description that a madman might come up with. As for the Kleinian (and other) extensions concerning the bad mother, that kind of unconscious is populated by a whole Manichean theatre, and it didn't work any worse; I believe it worked quite better...

A cohort of "serious" people—the French school of psychoanalysis—has cleaned up this anthropomorphic aspect (which is seemingly quite mad), and the descriptions of the unconscious end with mathemes and structure. It's become more serious!

As for me, I'd rather tend to sow some seeds to propose a model of the unconscious which would be akin to that of South American shamans, setting out from the idea that spirits populate things, landscapes, groups; that there are all sorts of becomings, all sorts of haecceities which trail along everywhere, and that there is consequently a sort of objective subjectivity (so to speak) that gathers together, breaks apart, and is reworked according to assemblages. The best exposition of this would obviously be in archaic thought.

Ultimately, it seems quite legitimate to attempt to model our representation based on this phenomenology of the powers [*puissances*] of the unconscious, particularly those that have been described in archaic precapitalist societies; to attempt to somewhat escape from the triangulated monotheist unconscious, from the unconscious of the Holy Trinity, and from a whole series of essential dualisms; and to take up Freudian conceptions once again (the first and second topographical theories, so as to see, not what should be kept of them, but what sort of translation is possible into another—let's say, much more pantheist—conception; to see what we can capitalize on with respect to the Freudian contribution, which is an effort worthy of praise, since, for quite a long time, one had instead tended to want to throw the baby out with the bathwater).

This boils down to the following goal: *how to translate the Freudian contribution (first and second topographies) into a theory of assemblages.*

With Freudian conceptions, we begin with the four dimensions[1] of drives:

- *Pressure* [La poussée / Drang] has a quantitative character in line with a topographical theory that somewhat involves keeping in reserve, for example in the ego. This pressure—a metapsychological category of the libido—in fact remains extremely difficult to determine: what happens to pressure when it is involved with the two fundamental drives, Eros and Thanatos? This is a theoretical problem: is Thanatos truly a second drive? Perhaps it's a decompensation, a decompression of Eros: a sort of disunion that works on the drive qua factor of entanglement or union. Freud's pulsional[2] dualism—anticipating a bit—is sufficiently complex...But I'd rather not dwell on that right now.
- *Source* [La source / Quelle], whose nature may vary depending on the conceptions. (Other difficulties will emerge between the source and objects, for often these categories straddle one another; but here we can definitely keep them such as they have been put forth in Freudian vocabulary). The source—which includes all the erogenous zones, albeit where some of them become prevalent—also implies the notion of propping[3], which concerns complete objects (ego, parental object). We therefore have pressure, and then we have the source pressure comes from. How does pressure incarnate itself?
- *The object* [L'objet / Objekt]: this is the means through which this pressure—passing across and out from this source—realizes itself.
- *Complete objects*. The complete object can be a parental propping—which brings us back to Oedipal scaffolding—or it can be the complete object of the ego (problematic of narcissism).
- *Partial objects*. They bring us back to the problematic of erogenous zones, then that of pre-Oedipal economy, back to Melanie Klein, etc.
- *Aim* [Le but / Ziel] Freud has always insisted a lot on distinguishing between this notion of aim and the notion of object. This will be important for allowing ourselves to separate the notion of drive from the notion of instinct, for example. The aim represents a sort of finality, of "drive destiny." We can always say that the object is a means, whereas the aim is a

direction, what I'd prefer to call: a mode of valorization (what does drive value?). Drive is therefore a bearer of values.

And that's where we'll find the problematic of different pulsional systems: following one topographical theory, we will have an opposition between pleasure and reality, between the self-preservative drives and Eros. Then, in another system, this will be a more fundamental opposition between Eros and Thanatos, wherein Eros envelops the other pulsional systems of oppositions. Ultimately, these are modulations of the pulsional aim, or modes of pulsional valorization.

A certain problem remains that I merely evoked: what is the status of representation in this affair? Overall, it's obvious that there's an opposition between a biological infrastructure in the drive and a system of representation: qua pressure—at minimum, in every case, qua source—drive needs to send representatives, needs to delegate deputies, which explains this very complex expression that's been translated as "representative of representation." And yet there's a lot of subtlety involved in knowing whether it's the whole drive with its four dimensions that delegates a representation, particularly in these two things:

- The representative of representation, or, as I'd prefer to say, the delegated representation.
- The affect that emerges quantically (quantum of affect).

So that's representation. And yet, are pressure and source this biological infrastructural base of the drive that express themselves through it? Or instead, is everything object and aim? There's a certain ambiguity. If you have a clarification below[4]...

Be that as it may, it's quite clear that the Freudian unconscious—insofar as it conveys fantasies, scenarios, complex phrases—concerns nothing but representation. The Freudian unconscious does not conserve pressure, source, libido such as they are.

In the four dimensions I attempted to elaborate[5], I proposed a system wherein the unconscious (or whatever we want to call it) wouldn't be fundamentally linked to a representative system, i.e. to the fact that we'd have to speak of it with language, the representations of words and objects. This is also—as I said at the start—an unconscious that trails along everywhere. One catches the unconscious like one catches the flu. One catches the unconscious in a landscape, in a faciality, in an animality...and then, one makes something of it, or one makes nothing of it, one happens to be consumed by...

There's nothing specific about having to metabolize the unconscious in a representation. So, in the same vein, what will characterize these "unconscious formations" (now, we better substitute this phrase directly with "assemblages") is the fact that assemblages are not drives; they may be drives, yet they may not be. In any case, the assemblage is not a pulsional system that falls into the dichotomy of the propping of objects, of systems of erogenous zones, of pressure, etc... All in all, it could be that an assemblage clings onto partial objects, takes on the semblance of compulsive pressures, or those types of things, but that's a variant like any other.

Expression

Thus, instead of putting pressure in the base (always with the simple opposition of base-infrastructure and representative superstructure), I will on the contrary put the system of

valorization on the first rank, which I will call *expression*. By connecting all these categories (expression, aim...) in this way, the systems of representation, rather than rising to the peak of a system of infrastructure, pass to the first rank as expression and not as representation, insofar as expression is understood as *a certain type of components that retain a relation of expression with different components of content*, yet without any intrinsic necessity, since there can be—according to the phrasing of [inaudible][6]—a relativism of the expression's relation to content (for example, a somatic component: today, when we say something like “my weak stomach,” which represents the whole system...). *There is indeed always a particular level of expression that knots together the set of components of content*. This is how expression becomes the mode of *valorization*, and how *expression-valorization* becomes first in the system. So, rather than speak of the libido, we will this time speak of *desire*, in the sense that this expression has something characteristic about it: based on what it engages as expressed, as territory, and as deterritorialization, it produces something equivalent to what [inaudible] and [inaudible][7] describe as *far-from-equilibrium formations*. Expression introduces and makes possible the attribution of haecceities, of becomings, of all sorts of things of the objective unconscious; it gathers various spirits together, various “leftovers” (this brings back old memories for us), and effectuates *a far-from-equilibrium semiotization of the strata*. The aim, the finality of that which is no longer libidinal drive but desiring formation, is a far-from-equilibrium semiotization. In one case, it involves neurosis, in another it involves poetry, in another case it involves a behavioral system in a given social milieu, etc...These all constitute so many systems of valorization that somewhat hold together, assemble deterritorialized formations, and then involve all sorts of ideological, economic (etc.) flows...

Content

Last time, I said that *content* may also—in parallel with the dominant semiotic—work on its own account. Certain dimensions of content do this, and that's what we compared to the potentiality (in this second dimension of content) of a schizo unconscious (in opposition to a neurotic or normal unconscious). In fact, a schizo unconscious engages heterogeneous substances, dissident, contradictory, antagonistic, ambivalent, polymorphously-perverse (etc.) modes of valorization...The dimension of content that involves heterogeneous substances—obviously, each time we would have to articulate what are the substances and what are the forms and matters that emit singularities which elude the substance/form relation—somewhat corresponds to Freud's notion of source, in the sense that these heterogeneous substances can include, for example, oral economy or anal economy, the economy of the gaze or of listening (which were added by Lacan into the list of *objets petits a*). At that point, I said—and he was a little flabbergasted by this—“But there are also Winnicott's transitional objects, and then there are institutional objects...” I made a categorization of *objets petits a, b, c, n*. This is ultimately the same idea.

The particular case of a reification—or, more exactly, the case of a black hole relation—with tits, with shit, with the gaze, or listening is possible—this is what constitutes the very fabric of the clinic—in the same way as other substances are possible, for example substances of economic, ethological semiotics (we will perhaps put them in the following dimension), or in the same way as any other component that can enter into this type of assemblage, either to be taken into a specific expression of a certain desiring valorization, or to be made into a

labor of dissidence, of autovalorization, a system of ambivalence, of ambiguity, etc.

So, this notion of content is in fact the extension—like that of the relation of an integral to a derivative—of the notion of source.

Territory

Last time, I said that the notion of *territory* was the third dimension. In Mexico, I met a senior psychoanalyst: "At last!"—he said to me—"you've brought back the validity of all psychoanalytic research concerning the ego! Because you have the neurotic unconscious, the psychotic unconscious, and then the whole exploration of the ego as an unconscious system, the research of Anna Freud, etc..."

"Sure, if you like, that doesn't bother me! Albeit, on the very condition of considering that these territories may in fact be the ego; that they may be all the partial egos à la Melanie [Klein], and therefore black hole egos, egos of abolition; but they may be the person, groups, all the modes of territorialization, the family, everything related to the socius, everything that engages systems of faciality traits, refrains, all the possible writings that constitute territories."

While all of that stuff—the ego or the family, the Oedipal triangle or a larger family—involves particular cases of territorialization, these cases are quite specifically linked to the hegemony of capitalist flows. In this case, we are reduced to having the ego. Whereas, in archaic primitive societies, there are transivist relations in which the problem of the ego is posed only exceptionally: in this article by [Pierre] Clastres, for example, the moment when the singer in the night goes out to sing all alone, for himself[8]. So, this is a relation which is, purely and simply, a face-to-face with death, wherein the singer is brought to a sort of excommunication.

These territories of the ego—as I've said and repeated with Deleuze—are definitely not territories that should be considered in a reified fashion: these are territories that always imply a certain potentiality of catastrophic deterritorialization, what I have called a black hole. This will no doubt help us considerably when we try to reflect on this infamous intuition of the death drive in Freud's work, to what is a certain relation of death to narcissism, to what compulsions of repetition are. In fact, *a certain type of loss of persistency inexorably leads to a black hole*: the different assemblages resonate together with respect to one another in their decompensation. This is a deterritorialization in which they present themselves in a resonance- and echo-phenomenon (see the figure below: consistency of expression of different substances of content, of different territory persistencies; these categories—object and territory—correspond together).

The machinic dimension

This is essentially the question of an abstract machinism, as well as the dimension of deterritorialization—this is what made me basically say at the beginning that there are truly spirits, "leftovers," everything that can haunt landscapes, all the other non-human assemblages, all the non-human becomings taken into this mode of valorization.

This machinic dimension relates to transistency, because each time there is the equivalent of a possible black hole at the level of consistency, substance, persistency, and transistency. This is precisely what constitutes this operation of attribution—of objective ideality—of

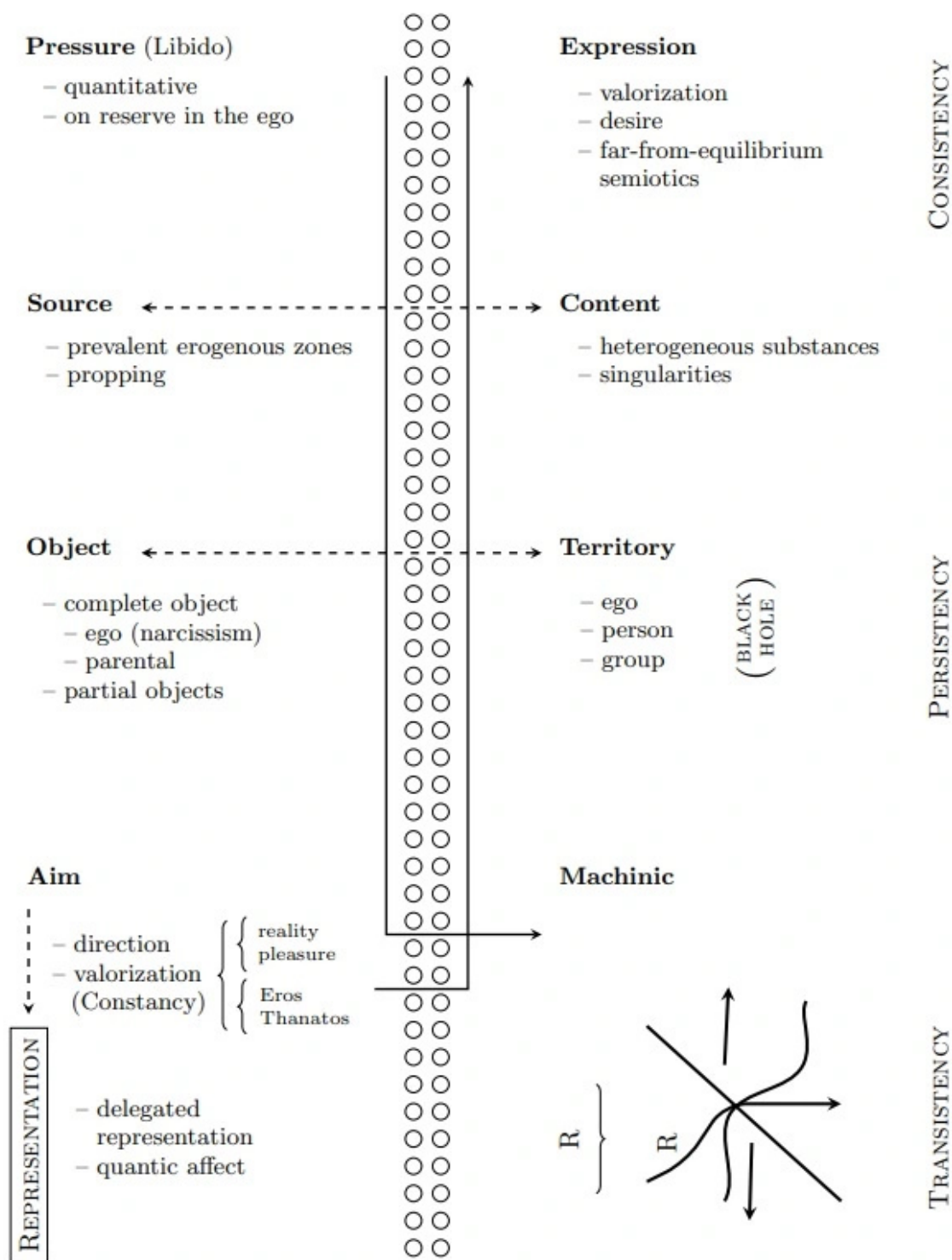
everything that trails along as becomings, as spirits: all the possessive magical idealities, but also all the mathematical idealities (a mathematician that amasses a mathematical ideality and attributes it to an experimental assemblage in fact carries out the same type of expressive operation), all the aesthetic, social (etc.) idealities.

This machinic dimension does not arise from a general economy; it introduces singularities, becomings; *it propels singularities of different matters of expression*.

And it's precisely what replaces libidinal pressure.

There you have it. At the start, we had the idea of an unconscious founded on an abstract general quantity, which, through a source, object, aims, provided representatives of the drive, whether they be representative delegates or affects that were somewhat all-too-full, that were the incapacity of passing into representation. This implies a discharge, a certain type of pulsional economy. There, we have no general economy of pressure, and therefore no thermo-dynamics. We have instead what I've called: a far-from-equilibrium semiotics that can work directly with incorporeals (which are by definition unquantifiable) because, such as they are, they are singularities. It is not a question of quantifying spirits or mathematical idealities: these are pure singularities which nevertheless enter into a certain economy of expression so as to fabricate, not libidinal pressure, but a certain valorization of desire. (This is not at all to assimilate them to analogical interpretations, like those of *[inaudible]*[9], or to Jungian archetypes.)

This perspective deletes desire's relation to representation. *Desire is not fantastical*. It proceeds by way of a far-from-equilibrium mode of semiotization. Sources are multiple, heterogeneous; objects are differentiated ad infinitum. It's not a question of speaking of object relations: there may be a prevalence of object relations (or of intra-familial economy), but this is a question of particular cases of an economy of different modes of territorialization with respect to their own assemblages. It's no longer a question of a psychogenesis in object relations.



M: I understand you want to compare assemblages to the first and second topographical theories, but this seems to collapse too quickly on what you said elsewhere.

F: That's the object! The system of conclusion on the four dimensions of the assemblage in *A Thousand Plateaus* can be applied to anything whatsoever: war machines, etc... The problem, here, was trying to see if this type of model can help us develop a conception (which is ultimately very practical) of the following question: "What are we studying in analysis or therapy, whether it be familial, individual, or something else?"

In the wake of these four Freudian categories—which, if we reflect hard enough, are found everywhere, in all dissidences—we could take up and work on another model once again, a Lacanian model: the key is the very idea that there be a somewhat representative

unconscious (whether you call it "unconscious signifier" or something else doesn't matter!) And that's what allows us to attribute all fantasies, dreams, manic acts, everything that proceeds from the primary process to the individual subjectivity you'll never get out of: you don't see at all how an unconscious communicates with an unconscious by way of transference, suggestion, hypnosis, identifications... You'll never get out of that! Or then, you'll get out of that only on the specific condition that you eject all singularities. Let's take the example you told me about when you came in earlier: this man who's been in analysis for eight years...?

M: He's thirty-three now, lived alone with his mom since he was three; his analyst basically sent him to me after eight years of analysis. He's someone we'd conventionally classify as an obsessional neurotic: extremely scrupulous, to the point that he can't work with the psychologist, he's reduced to playing a pawn. And outside, even in the student dormitory, he does these incredible tasks, which consist in verifying something like (for example): if he drags two or three "sheep[10]" on the ground, he'll wonder what's the diameter of the "sheep" with which he'll have to harangue the students. So, that's the big problem: he has to *measure* the diameter of these tiny accumulations of dust with a special cylindrical instrument. When he wakes up in the morning, he thinks about what he's going to wear today: given the coefficient of a knitting skin as $\frac{1}{4}$, a shirt as $\frac{1}{2}$...

F: What's the unit?

M: For him, it's a sort of theoretical unit with respect to the coefficient of warming himself. For example, one day he said to himself, "Yes! This morning it's $2.3/4$!", so then he wears $2.3/4$ (knitting skin = $\frac{1}{4}$, etc.). He listens to the weather forecast on the radio in the morning: "Yes, but what about last night? What was the temperature? I don't know the numbers from last night!" And he just loses it. He absolutely has to know the figures from the night before to make sense of this morning's temperature; he has to know if it went up, down, etc. This guy has a pretty amazing life!

He wants to go to mass. Problem: he is going to receive communion, but, consequently, he has to go to confession before receiving communion, and he has to make sure not to have bad ideas in the meantime. So he'll confess that he stroked his dog's belly, and to what extent he'd have to get closer to the dog's penis, unconsciously, to make the dog's penis stand up?... The confession ends: he must not think of anything until the moment of communion. It's unfortunate he has a life like that [*laughter*].

To dress, it takes up to an hour and a half to choose: there's the coefficient, but, afterwards, what then? He's gotta choose.

So in the end, I began a conventional systemic type of work with him, first resorting to what you call the stratified aspect of the assemblage. I met with his mother, and I met with him. The mom answered very clearly when I asked her questions. She can't leave him anything financially: as an old lady, she gets a very limited amount; she depends on him emotionally, not only as a center of interest, but also, without him she can't go on, yet she also can't imagine him leaving her.

First session. I point out what he does: he's a good boy, a boy who helps his mom and allows

her to have a financial equilibrium, allows her to have someone who's emotionally close to her and her center of interest. So, nothing needs to change.

The following month, I learn that meanwhile he wanted to suck his mom's tits and sleep with her. He took her to the movies to see a film about an incest story, he held her hand...

[End of tape]

Mom: You wanted him to be a good boy, but he wanted to even be a good husband...

Him: But what's going on?

Me: Why?

Him: It's not normal for me to live with my mother at thirty-three like that!

Me: Why not? Since when is it no longer normal to live alone with a woman, and with his mother all alone?

Him: But that's not normal!

Me: What's normality?

Him: But I'm coming here for you to change me!!!

Me: I've got nothing to do with that in this very particular case. Excuse me. He must stay as he is.

He then returns to his analyst.

Him: The other guy is a smoker! He laughs at me! You know he tells me not to change!

Analyst: Listen, I don't want to get involved in this stuff [*ces machins* **[11]**].

He comes back to me with his mom.

Him: I know! It's something you're doing to me, "Don't Change!", for me to change. The proof is that I no longer go to mass! So? Am I going to mass or not?

Me: Not to change.

Him: Not to change? But I don't know! Since I didn't go to mass, did...if I go to mass I will... change or not?

Me: But that's great! Stay hesitant like that. Don't change!

Him: But but but but but!!!!!!

Me: But it's all good! Congratulations! Well done! That's it!

Mom: That's really quite lovely, because before you, among the people who saw him, one psychoanalyst told him that things shouldn't change at the moment, and that later he would change. And you tell him: "This must never change!" This is very, very good [*laughter*]

So that's the stratified aspect of the assemblage, what we call the counter-paradox part, which keeps the guy from being contrary to what he does. And during this type of work I did

with him, we start chatting: we talk about meteorology, fog, temperature; me, about fog, the lighthouse [*phare*] all alone; him, about fog and the beacon [*phare*]. Then we talk about clarity, darkness, things that can be seen and things that cannot be seen. For him, it's the confusion of everyday life and the clarity of numbers; the numbers, something that really brings concision.

Abruptly he tells me that his numbers (coefficients, etc.) introduce clarity and beacon [*phare*] in everyday life, a life of emotional fog. And, at that moment, the session radically changes: suddenly, he sat down differently to describe his world of coefficients to me, of $\frac{1}{4}$, etc., as something fundamental. And the more I listened, the more he explained it to me.

Him: See? It's like a fog light, in a world where everything's fucked up, where everything's mixed up, I find my way through: boom! boom! boom [*pan! pan! pan!*]! But then, when I'm missing a number, it's panic!

Me: Mark the numbers.

Him: Hey! That's a good idea! You mean: take note of what's the weather on the radio?

Me: Sure. Why not?

So he felt better about things: on the one hand, he recognized something with respect to numbers in all its singularity, and, on the other hand, was even encouraged to take note of these figures, to be able to make his map.

The next session, he left for the first time on his own (and without his mother) for a vacation with friends; he's gone to the dance all alone:

Him: The girls refused me, and I didn't feel rejected; after all, they have that right!

He's off medication, he's stopped taking antidepressants and is sleeping well. So, obviously I was tearing my hair out:

Me: Jesus Christ! Don't go too fast.. You've got to salvage what's good from the past and the negative things you've gone through...

And that was humor and Woody Allen: he was a bit [*inaudible*], in his opinion. The [*inaudible*], that's someone who's unhappy because he brings everything down, who's awkward and fucked-up in every which way; someone who's got no chance; the day he buys candles is the day the sun never sets (some miserable poet of the Middle Ages said that once). Someone who no longer has any chance, he can make a good show of things, that's not the problem.

Him: I know what to do!

Me: What's that?

Him: I'll tell my stories, with humor! Don't worry, next time, you'll see!

Next time, he came with a text! His mother and I were cracking up the whole time. He talked about his panic attacks, his anxiety problems, he laughed.

In discussion, it was suggested that he edit it, like Woody Allen edits a movie. Everything

changed: the camera zooms in, we see faces, his, and how it all happens.

Comments, voiceover: we were dying laughing.

Him: Now I know what I'm going to do: I'm going to pick up a girl, knowing that she won't want me [*laughter*]. But I won't go for someone too hot, because I don't want to waste any chances...with the hot ones. Do I warn my friends or not? If they know, they might laugh at her, and that's not fair! For me, it's not about making fun of her, just about making me a little stronger...in my story.

Of course, there are elements of a counter-paradox here, or stratified aspects of assemblages, we draw up the map of redundancies, but there are also purely singular elements in this guy right here. Another, much more beautiful case is one where a girl became extremely suicidal and bulimic...

F: It'd be better to discuss the first case first, because you'll recall the second one, right?

M: Ok, but the second is worth it! Boris Vian, his novel *Froth on the Daydream*, and Carolyn Carlson! But let's talk about the first case, if you'd prefer.

F: Here's what's really striking: the analysts who've seen this guy, in one way or another, necessarily emphasized his relation to tits, the mother, the repressive situation, the foreclosure of the father, etc. That's obvious! Considering that, somewhere in this territorial dimension, there's a black hole economy, a narcissistic economy, either of the Oedipal sort, or...doesn't matter!

Some things—which, to be fair, you haven't explained—for me seem to be the inductive phase of another assemblage. You brought back the engagement of a certain number of components of content: I get that the mother's there, and therefore a flux of expression, of presence..., a different kind of flux complexifies the system. On the other hand, there's yourself, who tries to make what you are more complex than what he expects you to be. In addition, the component of money [*argent*—lit. silver] is another element—"After all, I need him to be sick!" It's no doubt a classic staple in your family-therapy kitchen, but at long last! [*laughter*]. That *de facto* plays out as a complexification of the model from the point of view of the components of expression put in play. Obviously, what's essential lies elsewhere! The veritable phenomenon of decompensation (black hole?) at the level of a general impoverishment of components occurs at the *positive* level of the investment of a component of expression that seems obsessive: an enjoyment [*jouissance*], a monstrous passion of expressing something with a certain rigor, all these extraordinary things you've described with respect to measurement. That's where a component of valorization propels you to the limit of the absurd, to the limit of abolition. But the abolition of what? The abolition of all the rest of the other components of expression, save for that one alone. But desire is truly there, it's *positively* there, while in this economy, it would be negatively caught in a relation of lack: lack of the mother, lack of the maternal tit, lack of pulsional propping, lack of the object relation, etc...

As for recognition, it's merely: "I don't give a fuck whether you do this or something else"... That's the idiotico-political approach [*la démarche bêtico-politique*]*—to recognize the other is to give a fuck about what he does or doesn't do; that approach is neither for nor against. That's what you can attest to only by manifesting yourself in your economy of desire, your*

wanting to fuck around with your authentic thingamajigs [*trucs*]. Then you have the scandal, somewhere: "Oh well, that one then! What's this assemblage of expression where people would really express themselves according to their economy of desire and not according to what they're paid for in an economic contractual relationship? But then, where are we going? Brute psychoanalysis! Scandal! Call the doctors! This man is either a pervert or completely insane: in any case, he's dangerous!"

Thirdly, there's an assemblage of such complexity that it cannot be grasped by any Lacano-Freudian analysis. It would take an enormous amount of work to explore the possibility of making an assemblage of enunciation in which the following would be inserted: your different modes of expression + mama's different modes of expression + the video (here, this is one of the essential machinic elements) + the church (which, in one and the same fell swoop, brings us back to a fourth machinic dimension)...

This is about how abstract machines—and not a quantum of libido sublimated in religious investments—can effectively intervene in a certain type of assemblage of information to give it a consistency of the collective assemblage of enunciation, with black hole personae, video, and lord knows what! This is what makes me think it's about [*inaudible*], histories of Jewry or whatever-the-fuck that manifest when transformation has in fact taken place: what is it they've narrated there—taken from the Talmud or elsewhere—that, in a single stroke, makes it such that the phenomenon of transistency transforms the consistency of expression. And it's this (this isn't a quantity of libido transference that will invest in the analyst's person): somewhere, due to some kind of fluke or ingenuity or bullshit (or what not), the fact of finding a sort of machinic vitamin, the fact of inserting it into this very assemblage gives it a consistency of expression, makes it function precisely as a chapel, a little contrivance [*machin*], like my example of the shaman.

That's what metabolizes machinic unconscious dimensions, which in any case had no chance to be metabolized in a performance...In fact, in the end for this young man, it could have been arranged by participating in Zen exercises or by travelling to Lourdes[12]—no! not to Lourdes! Anything but that! [*laughter*].

M: Actually, the [*inaudible*][13] and degrees of temperature worked through Woody Allen, who served as a bridge between the two churches; and it's based on a film and a cinematographic text with voiceovers and a whole series of movements that this guy began to rejoice in a certain distance from his situation and that he told me, for the first time, about openly having fun without suffering.

Mom: I'm so happy! You'll finally allow him to be happy just as he is, without anything changing! [*laughter*]

Him: But, in the end...

Mom: We'll see! For the moment, I'm happy!

F: What you're saying is that Freud's goal with the different topographical theories is what can be called a principle of constancy. This varies according to the topographies—especially with the introduction of the death drive—but ultimately it comes down in some sense to a thermodynamic economy of returning to the initial state, whether it be a question of the pleasure

principle and the reality principle, or whether it be a question of the economic relation between Eros and Thanatos.

While it's not the principle of constancy, it is the "that nothing changes." But what? A consistency of the assemblage of the enunciation. We actually see that the "that nothing changes" involves the order of repetition, i.e. what I call a far-from-equilibrium economy of valorization: that nothing changes in this structure of change which has integrated his elements of singularity. That's up to you! Precisely because when you compose a poem, some music, a rhythm, there you're trying to hold together—far from the equilibrium of ordinary language—extremely singular things that absolutely would not hold together elsewhere.

M: The mom reads more on the territorial level. She understands it like this: a doctor who keeps my son in the family is a good one. But, for the moment, here's what's happening: the extraordinary movement he's in completely shatters his relationship with her, such as she expected it to continue to exist, albeit without at all being something that fundamentally makes sense at this very level: it passes elsewhere.

F: I don't know at all if there's ultimately any interest in seeking with this type of model to describe your behavior and what you're doing, how you go about things when you assemble your interventions and your statements. I have no idea! In my opinion, it should simply be interesting perhaps to give more assurance and more boldness to cut oneself off from the introjection of representations that have been caught with psychologizing conceptions.

D: I have the impression, **M**, that when you say "Nothing must change," it allows you to completely drift with this guy on his own singularities and yours too, am I right? Because in the end, you're a group all to yourself, so you get to take on these registers and that completely reassures you. I don't know why. I never understood why. What you've been able to explain didn't satisfy me. Well! I see it works, so I agree! I never understood that other than seeing you do it, but I have the impression that all of this allows you to take off with people you see and fully exploit the valorization of a power [*puissance*] of expression.

M: Félix has also helped me a lot with that. In fact, for a long time I worked in such a way that I was constantly censoring myself, in other words, I worked on...myself [*laughter*].

D: And were you getting there?

M: A little bit. For a long time I worked on trying to follow my maps. One day **F.** saw a tape like that from me, and he said, "But **M.**, what's going on, that's not what you're talking about, This is something else entirely!" He told me a story about baggage^[14] I had never heard before: "To what extent does this story open your baggage and close it and speak of your baggage with this type...?" That's true. Then, I stopped censoring myself, which only happened rarely anyway because I wasn't able to censor myself all that much. As a result, my therapeutic successes were outside my therapeutic will: they were linked to the fact that I allowed myself to go, and not to the fact that I was trying to be a good therapist. And that's what I do now: I effectively allow myself to go to what you call "raving" [*délirer*], and I see that things are happening, albeit things that leave me completely dumbfounded. The second story is about a girl who, when she comes in, is bulimic and...

D: you just can't give that one up! [*laughter*]

F: Hold up! Some people may have more questions. I think it's worth seeing what this guy's story's like in everyone's heads. Right? Any comments?

M: This is the story of a girl who's bulimic, she dances and she's got a really big problem. She comes in with her mom and sister. From the beginning, she speaks with remarkable clarity, such warmth in the relationship, and maybe something in fact takes shape between me and her.

To be quick about it, this is a family that has a classic map: the father has left the mother, who's in total disbelief and imagines he'll return. One of the girls—the bulimic one—had left, her sister stayed with their mother. Then, at this point, it's quite clear that the father isn't coming back: the mother is going to have to move out soon, and things aren't going smoothly. The oldest daughter comes back and becomes bulimic. (As an aside to **D**: you may know them, but keep that to yourself, ok!). That's when she comes to my office: so I look at how this girl—who's quite a remarkable girl—has come to divert attention to herself, to allow her sister and mother to breathe.

Second session: she presents herself as doing very well, obviously quite well. But I don't really buy it. I'm not sure why. And I tell her she can't be ok because she definitely knows what will happen to her sister if she gets better and leaves; her sister will continue falling apart, and so on. And yet, in two sessions, the bulimia's gone, no more bulimia! And so she started to leave the house. I ask her: "What's going to happen to your sister," and she responds, "it's going to be mayhem when I go."

Third session: the sister has left the house. The ex-bulimic arrives, very thin: "You were right when you told me that you didn't believe my story for a moment. That's true, I spend my time going in circles with people and myself, saying I'm fine, when I've only really been thinking about shooting myself ever since I was fourteen. And it's true that when I say I'm fine I'm actually not. So when you told me that, I wondered how this could be possible? How does he know?"

I ask her to talk to me, then tell me everything she likes: Boris Vian, I also start to talk about Boris Vian, his novel *The Froth of Daydreams*, things I like, dance, Carolyn Carlson. She also likes her a lot; I have a friend in Geneva who likes Carolyn Carlson so much: so I told her about what my friend told me.

And I saw this girl—extremely depressed at the start of the session—start to function quite differently and tell me about things, things about dance, music, body movements. She told me...What'd she tell me? That the body was the brain of the head, things like that. And so everything developed more and more like that, to a truly exponential point. Then she told me: "It's amazing how good I feel!" Then she left.

One month later (I see her every month), I saw her again. "I don't know what happened last session," she told me, "but I don't feel the same anymore. I feel much more sure of myself; I don't face things the same way anymore. I'm also starting to experience this in relation to dance and a whole series of things that are really mine. Until then, what I talked to you about, these were things I was sliding over, things I had no control over. Now, I dunno, it's part of me."

I'm not sure what happened. But, quite obviously, maybe it's the fact of me talking about

Carolyn Carlson, and her too: she's a dancer, just like this girl; to have talked about Boris Vian, Charlie Parker, these kinds of subjects, no-holds-barred, like that, with the mother who says nothing? Is this also something on the level of what you call matter of expression, that brought this about...? Anyway, the point is that now I keep going—that's my usual map—to say I don't see why she would change, which puts me in a bit of a difficult situation in the beginning. For example, in a case like this, throughout the course of the session there's an ultra-visible change, and, at the end of the day, what had happened is simply—apparently—speaking of what we like, that's it.

F: At first glance, because of everything you've said, I'll be skeptical about this kind of thing... Something happened, but does it all boil down to "talking about what you like?" That's exactly what you need to know. I'm not so sure.

D: Didn't she fall in love with you?

M: I don't think so. I don't think it's at that level. I really believe something else happened: obviously something where she felt herself in what she was going through and in what she wasn't talking about, ultimately. It's like being accepted as a girl who wants to kill herself ever since she was fourteen (instead of worrying about it, I accept that and don't want to change it) and wants to talk about what she likes and doesn't like...At first, I was talking about this story of wanting to kill herself, and she progressively brought me to talk about what she liked by herself...

D: This reminds me a little of the work I do face to face: you're there, well, you have things in common, and then it works...That's called transference, no more, no less; it seems less interesting than the first case, where there's a large number of more heterogenous and differentiated elements.

M: Maybe it's less interesting. All in all, there's this change in the session.

F: I started to say that what interested me in the comparison of the two models was possibly to be able to recuperate mechanisms from the Freudian model, which didn't invent them, which didn't pull them out of thin air, but which found them: it's merely a question of situating them in a system of integrals. It seems to me that in what you say, there were at least two classic trap-mechanisms in play: you thwarted the first trap, but it was set only for you to outsmart it so that you fall into another trap. It's a trap to the second degree: "Oh my, look how strong you are! You've foiled this trap!" [*laughter*]. By foiling it, you caught your foot in a second trap, which is—effectively—a transference trap. In fact, if we listen to you—I believe everyone here has listened to you—it's quite obvious that you have started talking about Carolyn Carlson as though with the girl to whom—if I understood you correctly—you are very attached, your friend in Switzerland. Furthermore, when you were telling this story, you had a transference onto **D**: "I'm telling you not to recognize her, but—in telling you—I'm sure you will recognize her immediately, since..."; you've reproduced the double mechanism [*laughter*]. There, it seems to me, we're actually in the category of identifications, of romantic relationships. She falls in love with you: so, accept it! We can make love with words when it involves dance, bodies...

X: In front of the mother.

F: All the more! Yes. If this is true, we would of course understand why you're quite right to be pissed off and why you say "no!": because behind it there's death, and there's also a whole series of narcissistic engagements and interests. So there, really, in this other type of economy, there's no point in not... This is a little like the test you had for **P** last time, saying to him: "But at long last! What you got into! Why did you come to this situation where you were freaking out at the thought "call me when you come in through the window," what the fuck!" Perhaps we can ultimately be led to a question like this. Why, in principle, on the mere assumption—a purely theoretical assumption, like an axiom—nothing could take place on the order of transistency (change of persistency, consistency) if we're dealing with a single, non-heterogeneous component.

The interest of your first exposition was that we had a multiplicity, a complexity of components: video, the contrivance [*machin*], the church, the mother, etc... But here, we have a silent mother and a pure exercise of signifying speech, which would allow us to interpret all that in Lacano-Freudian terms. So this ain't it, chief. It's quite simple: you have to look for something else.

M: ...it is that, as well.

F: Dangerously so! It's really the dumbass-trap! Because if we come to the idea that we just had to talk about Carolyn Carlson and it'd be all good, well good! Ok. We can pack up and leave!

X: I don't think that's it. I believe there's another question, which is: "what's the intuition?" And, in fact, if this girl started talking, it's because when she said "I'm doing very well," **M** replied: "There's something wrong." So what's that?

D: That's flirting!

F: Yes, that's it!

X: But for her, where's it situated...?

M: Actually, it's not flirtatious. As I experienced it, there was something a little too beautiful. Impossible! This woman is so happy when she comes in that I say to myself, "That's not possible!" This wasn't purely systemic, it's true I didn't believe it. Félix and I, by the way, often do that between the two of us, without necessarily being flirtatious: "Tell me some stories!" One feels something and, for the other person, after fifteen minutes, it's not that clear what... There, I actually think something happened, not some kind of flirting, but instead something all too beautiful.

F: A scam. Imaginary.

M: Absolutely. But I'm not convinced... Then, what got me hooked about Carolyn Carlson—I actually know very little, but it's like what my friend told me. It's definitely important, but...

F: She's the one who scammed you! She's the one who grabbed onto something of yours!

M: Definitely. But I'm not convinced these elements don't also exist: this isn't all that pure, we're not just instigators of expression. I believe that this happens on different levels.

F: Remember what you explained to **P**, who lived like that in Parnassus, until he realized that all the dimensions of the assemblage were completely shriveled up. Ah! Everything's fine! Everything's fine! And he no longer had a grip...

M: Except...this is different.

F: That's because there was no possibility of the proliferation of substances of content within new assemblages. Your assemblage of expression in the first case: we can clearly see this guy fit in with a theater group, a cinema group, or some other group and go pick up a girlfriend with something, etc...We can see that go in all directions. But considering what you told us about, this is quite a relation of quasi-religious transference onto you! How are you going to keep going? After fifteen sessions, are you going to stop? You won't stop, you won't be able to! At some point, you'll risk being trapped.

There is indeed a destiny—not the destiny of Freud's drives—but a machinic destiny: if you start winning—it's like in a casino when you play with very little money—well, you're sure to lose! That's certain because you won't be able to keep playing as soon as you start losing. So the point is to be able to lose for a while: this is the elementary principle of bidding one's time to raise the stakes. But you, you started winning so much from the start that you then have to say to yourself, "Oh good! I'll hunker down in the end anyway."

M: This is where our tool is interesting. I told him, "You're going way too fast, I don't trust what's going on. You have to go back to the past to find what was positive in it..." Basically, here we have a tool that saves us [*laughter*] because it isn't integrated into this map. Furthermore, it's a tool very much on the level of the dominant code, but our luck is that these codes don't completely overlap, which sometimes gets us out of trouble, despite ourselves, into something we don't consider, even affectively, I believe.

When I told this story to Félix, my first line was: "Something happened between me and her and our two realities." Right off the bat, I sent the message on the level of me and her. So yeah, there was something involving identification, and it's true there's a whole aspect of hers I'm extremely sensitive to: her intelligence, her sensitivity, and many other things that make your analysis not wrong at all.

F: And what happened to the sister?

M: She's pretty fucked up.

F: But you didn't call her in?

M: No. I analyze the fact that she left as extremely positive, because she was completely consumed by the mother.

F: Yes, but that she's consumed by the mother, that's one thing; but that you see it, you see it with or without the mother...

M: For me, as long as she's getting away with it and she's into something of her own, you don't necessarily have to see her.

F: Yeah, all right.

M: Because otherwise I'm re-familializing something...

F: Don't be so sure. Familializing doesn't mean welcoming the family.

Y: But she still left when the other one came back, or soon after?

M: No. The other one came back. The mother had to move out and wanted to move with her youngest, the twenty-year old. She said, "No, I'm going somewhere else."

Y: But the other one had come back?

M:

The other: You're scared!

The sister: Yes, I'm afraid to go to **M's** because he reveals something in me I'm afraid of.

The other: It's good you haven't returned. **M** told me to tell you that you're helping the family in this way by not having to confront a whole slew of things [*laughter*].

"Listen, you're going way too fast, I don't understand what makes you tick [*votre machin*], and I'm no longer following you": that's my tuning fork.

F: That's very important!

M: So in reality, even when things happen that could trap me in all sorts of ways, I refuse people change just as I refuse them the story of the end-goal, I maintain.

F: No, but, you see, all the same, we could try to think about these stories of transference, of countertransference, and all that. We can say: in principle, when there's transference, when there's countertransference, that's because we're in resistance, we're in deep shit. What seemed really great to me in the other example was saying: "Listen bro, do whatever you want, I don't give a fuck!" This isn't transference, this is the degree zero of transference.

- You really don't give a fuck? Ok!
- The proof is: that's me, that's how I do!

So when you have this degree zero, that means in fact you can assemble something like a *tabula rasa* of intersubjectivity: "Ok good, do as you wish! Come, don't come; fuck around, don't fuck around: it's all good!"

Whereas here, in the second case, you still see the benefits, since everyone has felt it here—Ah! Carolyn Carlson!—Caution! What are you about to gain as profit, as libidinal surplus-value in all that? Whether it's a positive or negative surplus value doesn't matter. All in all, there's just as much risk expressed in a black hole phenomenon, in blocking god-knows-what other type of assemblage. I brought up the sister, but that can be anything else, because the ideal in all that is precisely that it isn't assembled from the point of view of the enunciation with you: "Go assemble yourself elsewhere! And the less I hear about it, the better off I'll be, because I can finally devote myself to my girlfriend in Geneva or whatever-the-fuck, Carolyn Carlson's mine, not yours!" And then, it's really unlikely that we will come out the same way!

M: One other thing; something about time and money, this frequently happens:

People: It's already over!

Me: It sure is!

People: But that only took five minutes!

Me: Yep, I need to earn as much money as possible in the shortest amount of time; you understand that things have to go quickly under these conditions.

People: (crazy looks, they can't believe their ears).

F: That was also Freud's attitude toward money.

M: In that case, I'm playing off the fact that I don't give a fuck!

F: That's not why it always works out!

M: No, definitely not! I am playing off the fact that I work piece by piece like a tailor, and I can't afford the luxury of keeping people for five hours. The other day, someone—who's in textiles—tells me he's willing to pay a wholesale price! But I said to him: "You get that I have to distract myself after forty-five minutes, I'm really fed up with this! So really, I can't continue with the same two sessions in a row, I have to distract myself." I play off this element: my pleasure—what matters most—or my profit. I retranslate it.

F: I'm not so sure myself, because that's still treating it in terms of a quantitative system; amount of fun, amount of money. That's part of the contents. I would prefer, for my part, a much more functionalist formulation, a formulation of the fourth dimension: when it works, it works; but when it no longer works or doesn't work any further, it's best to stop. "If it works, keep going; if you'd rather leave, I don't give a fuck."

M: Having said that, for me the problem isn't about lots of money, but how I use it. In reality, we play around with money, we modulate it according to the situation. For example, today we received a family where the father, a financial advisor to a large bank, is extremely wealthy and very contemptuous: "Who are you? Are you a doctor? Who's the director?" This went on for two hours and became unbearable!

Father: How much do I owe you?

Me: One Franc.

Father: Really? Just one?

He looks for a coin, hands it to us as if it were a precious stone, and ends up putting it on the table and leaving [*laughter*]. Two hours = one Franc! That must have really fucked with his head!

X: You should've asked him to pay in twenty-cent coins or write a check! One Franc! [*laughter*].

F: His money isn't worth a damn! This is all hurling his mental economy into a void! It's like if you asked a musician at a concert: "Are you playing a note for me?"

M: What you said about the second case interested me a great deal: I believe that it was

definitely about avoiding the first trap and falling into the other. If only it seems I got out of it without doing that on purpose, with my refrain: "You're going too fast, that sounds a bit suspect, let's go back to the past."

F: There is also a problem—which I don't want to introduce here, since it'd be too theoretical—it's the idea of fate, Szondi[15] and (temperature degrees). It's a conception of the unconscious that must calculate, not concerning the previous fixations, but concerning what's happening at that point... [end of tape]

[1] [Freud's main text from which Guattari is gathering these definitions stems from Freud's essay "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," and a good place to find this essay is in *The Freud Reader* edited by Peter Gay, who provides a nice editorial note to Strachey's translation and emphasizes there the need to understand *Trieb* as "drive"—TN.]

[2] [Insofar as a more proper translation of Freud's *Trieb* in English is "drive" rather than "instinct" (contra Strachey, Freud's main English translator and editor), I have chosen to render the French *pulsion* in line with this decision; regrettably, a good translation of the adjective *pulsionnel(le)* is lacking—the terms "driven" or "drive-based" are unsatisfactory—therefore, as a sort of compromise, I have chosen to render the adjective in line with the French as "pulsional," lest we fall back into the confusions that a standard term like "instinctual" might bring into play. Iain Hamilton Grant, for many of these same reasons, instead has chosen to translate the French noun also in a transliterative way for his rendering of Lyotard's *Libidinal Economy*, and he provides good reasons for doing so in the glossary he prepares for that work—TN.]

[3] [Jean Laplanche revisits the notion of "propping" [l'étayage / Anlehnung] in Freud and provides the most articulate exposition of what this "quasi-concept" means for Freud's discourse; in short, "propping" describes the way in which the infant's inchoate sexual drive at first "leans on" the self-preservative drive for "support" (to diverge later), which provides a certain leverage for analyzing the initial entanglement of sexual pleasure and, for example, breastfeeding—TN.]

[4] [Here, the only clarification I'd like to add is merely in line with Freud's original definitions: pressure is defined as a *constant* impact of motor force or stimulus from within the organism that is the measure of the demand for work it represents; pressure is the very essence of drives and is defined by a certain activity. The aim of drives is always "satisfaction" [Befriedigung] and is translated in French as *apaisement*, which is much closer to Freud's colloquial German insofar as, instead of a notion of filling (satisfaction literally being to make/do enough/fully), what the aim indicates for drives is the "release" and reduction of pressure (whether this optimal level be complete evacuation of all pressure or a keeping at constant sustainable minimum is ambiguous in Freud's texts and is a major concern of Laplanche's—cf. *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*). The object is always *arbitrary*, and its main function is to fulfill the aim—it is "the thing in regard to which or through which [the drive] is able to achieve its aim." Insofar as the object is always arbitrary or variable with respect to the aim, this allows for a definition of "fixation" as an attachment on a particular object. The source of drives is the "somatic process represented in mental life by [a drive]." For Freud, only biology can investigate this function and origin of the source, and it "lies outside the scope of

psychology"—TN.]

[5] [This was the subject of the seminar "Four Unconsciouses" given three weeks beforehand in the previous session; see my translation of this work here: <https://fractalontology.wordpress.com/2020/04/12/new-translation-of-felix-guattaris-seminar-les-quatres-inconscients-13-01-1981/>—TN.]

[6] [My guess here is that the inaudible name is Hjelmslev, from whom Guattari inherits and rehandles content/expression throughout *A Thousand Plateaus* and many of his solo writings—TN].

[7] [A wild guess on the names here would be René Thom, the great French thinker of thermodynamics, and perhaps Gilbert Simondon, the great French thinker of metastability—TN.]

[8] [Guattari is recalling a reference he makes in *The Machinic Unconscious*: "When Pierre Clastres evokes the solitary song of an Indian face in the night, he describes it in an attempt to escape from the processes of the "subjection of man to the general network of signs," in an aggression against words as means of communication." The reference can be found in Clastres' *Society against the State*, p. 107 and on p. 110 of *The Machinic Unconscious*—TN.]

[9] [There's no clue to tell who Guattari is referring to here. Although Simondon revamps a theory of analogy, but this seems unlikely due to the obvious influence of Simondon on Deleuze (explicitly) and Guattari himself (implicitly—the language of singularities, haecceities, etc.). It's possible that Deleuze's critique of analogy in *Difference and Repetition* may shed some light on the potential target, but Guattari's allusion is most likely directed at a contemporary psychoanalyst that may have been trending at the time in certain circles. The target could be Freud himself, but this is unlikely given his prevalence in the rest of the text. The target could also be Wittgenstein, who proposes an analogy between psychoanalysis and his later philosophical work—TN.]

[10] [The wordplay gets lost in the English, but the word *mouton* "sheep" is functioning here in conjunction with the notion of "dust" [*poussière*] in the next sentence, insofar as it stands metonymically to the notion of *flocon*, "flake," which itself relates etymologically to "tufts of wool," a synchedoche of the multiplicity of fluffs of wool for the flock-aggregates of sheep-individuals—TN.]

[11] [This recalls the way in which Serge Leclaire, a prominent student of Lacan's, pokes fun at Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on "machines" by reiterating the notion of *machins* ("contraptions"), which is how it is translated in the round-table "In Flux" in Guattari's *Chaosophy*—TN.]

[12] [Here Guattari is alluding to the religious history of Lourdes: in the 19th century, the little town of Lourdes in southern France rose to prominence as an important site of pilgrimage and religious tourism after the construction of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, which pays homage to the canonization of Bernadette Soubirous, a peasant girl who claimed to have experienced Marian apparitions that asked for the construction of a chapel in the surrounding area—TN.]

[13] [It's possible that the inaudible here is referring back to the numbers, figures, or coefficients of $\frac{1}{4}$, etc. that the young man obsesses over—TN.]

[14] [This notion evokes both "emotional baggage" and the luggage (the suitcase) we pack when preparing for a trip—TN.]

[15] [Guattari is alluding to the Hungarian psychiatrist Léopold Szondi, who is referenced several times in *Anti-Oedipus* and who developed an approach called "fate analysis"—TN.]

taken from here: <https://fractalontology.wordpress.com/2020/07/22/new-translation-of-guattaris-seminar-drive-black-hole/>

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